

Marriage by Design

8/12/12

I. Myths About Marriage

A. True/False Quiz

1. The percentage of people getting married is declining
 2. The percentage of people living together before or instead of marriage (co-habitation) has increased
 3. Living together before marriage is an effective way to improve one's chances of choosing a good marriage partner and ensuring that a marriage will last
 4. Approximately half of all marriages end in divorce
 5. All marriages have an equal chance of ending in divorce
 6. Christians are as likely as non-Christians to be divorced
 7. Single people are better off financially than married people
 8. Single people are generally happier than married people
- B. Our culture's perspective on marriage and commitment
- C. A story of commitment from God's perspective

II. God's Design for Marriage

A. Whose idea was marriage anyway? (Genesis 2:18-24)

B. Marriage is serious business to God (Mal. 2:13-16; 1 Peter 3:7)

C. What is God's design for marriage? (Eph. 5:18-33)

D. What do our roles within the marriage relationship look like?

"Wives, understand and support your husbands in ways that show your support for Christ. The husband provides leadership to his wife the way Christ does to his church, not by domineering but by cherishing. So just as the church submits to Christ as he exercises such leadership, wives should likewise submit to their husbands. Husbands, go all out in your love for your wives, exactly as Christ did for the church—a love marked by giving, not getting. Christ's love makes the church whole. His words evoke her beauty. Everything he does and says is designed to bring the best out of her, dressing her in dazzling white silk, radiant with holiness. And that is how husbands ought to love their wives." Eph. 5:22-25 (The Message)

E. Husbands: Leadership through sacrificial love

F. Wives: Submit, support, encourage and respect

G. Bottom Line: All about Love and Respect

"However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband." (Eph. 5:33)

III. Practical Ways to Make Marriage Work

A. Marriage as God's tool for spiritual transformation

B. The critical importance of friendship to marriage success

"Husbands and wives who want their marriages to be enduring and endearing must be friends. [Eminent sociologist John Gottman observes that]...the determining factor in whether wives feel satisfied with ...their marriage is, by 70 percent, the quality of the couple's friendship. For men, the determining factor is, by 70 percent, the quality of the couple's friendship. So men and women come from the same planet after all...Happy marriages are based on a deep friendship. By this I mean a mutual respect for and enjoyment of each other's company...Friendship fuels the flames of romance because it offers the best protection against feeling adversarial toward your spouse."

Real Marriage, Mark and Grace Driscoll

C. Love Languages: Actions that demonstrate love and respect

"The hard and deliberate work of knowing your spouse and loving him or her *fittingly* is foundational to any good marriage. Because our culture thinks of love as mainly an involuntary feeling and not a conscious action, this foundational skill is often missed entirely." The Meaning of Marriage, Timothy Keller

The Five Love Languages (Gary Chapman)

1. Words of Affirmation
2. Quality Time
3. Receiving Gifts
4. Acts of Service
5. Physical Touch

IV. Martin & Katherine's Unlikely Story of Friendship and Love

Resources for further study:

The Meaning of Marriage, Timothy and Kathy Keller

Love and Respect, Emerson Eggerichs

Real Marriage: The Truth About Sex, Friendship and Life Together,

Mark and Grace Driscoll

The Five Love Languages: The Secret to the Love that Lasts,

Gary Chapman

A Marriage Without Regrets, Kay Arthur

The Power of Prayer to Change Your Marriage, Stormie Omatian

Desperate Marriages: Moving Toward Hope and Healing in Your Relationship, Gary Chapman

His Needs, Her Needs: Building an Affair-Proof Marriage,

Willard F. Harley, Jr.

For Men Only: A Straightforward Guide to the Inner Lives of Women,

Shaunti and Jeff Feldham

The Marriage You've Always Wanted, Gary Chapman

Pure Desire, Ted Roberts

www.stateofourunions.org (resource for research on marriage, divorce, family issues)

Porn Again Christian, Mark Driscoll (Very direct--primarily for men and their sons regarding the devastating impact of pornography on male female relationships and men's spiritual lives. Available as a free e-book at http://theresurgence.com/books/porn_again_christian/)

"In any relationship, there will be frightening spells in which your feelings of love seem to dry up. And when that happens you must remember that the essence of a marriage is that it is a covenant, a commitment, a promise of future love. So what do you do? You do the acts of love, despite your lack of feeling. You may not feel tender, sympathetic, and eager to please, but in your actions you must be tender, understanding, forgiving, and helpful. And, if you do that, as time goes on you will not only get through the dry spells, but they will become less frequent and deep, and you will become more constant in your feelings. This is what can happen if you decide to love."

The Meaning of Marriage, Timothy and Kathy Keller, p. 104

"People get from books the idea that if you have married the right person you may expect to go on "being in love" forever. As a result, when they find they are not, they think this proves they have made a mistake and are entitled to a change—not realizing that, when they have changed, the glamour will presently go out of the new love just as it went out of the old one."

Mere Christianity, C.S. Lewis

"This is my beloved and this is my friend." Song of Solomon 5:16

"The main barrier to the development of a servant heart in marriage is... the radical self-centeredness of the sinful human heart. Self-centeredness is a havoc-wreaking problem in many marriages, and it is the ever-present enemy of every marriage. It is the cancer in the center of a marriage when it begins, and it has to be dealt with. In Paul's classic description of love, in 1 Corinthians 13, he says, "Love is patient and kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs." Repeatedly Paul shows that love is the very opposite of "self-seeking," which is literally pursuing one's own welfare before those of others."

The Meaning of Marriage, Timothy and Kathy Keller, p. 56

"But the great thing about the model of Christian marriage we are presenting here is that when you envision the "someone better" you can think of the future version of the person to whom you are already married. The someone better is the spouse you already have. God has indeed given us a desire for the perfect spouse, but you should seek it in the one to whom you're married. Why discard this partner for someone else only to discover that person's deep, hidden flaws? Some people with serial marriages go through the cycle of infatuation, disillusionment, rejection, and flight to someone else—over and over. The only way you're going to actually begin to see another person's glory-self is to stick with him or her."

The Meaning of Marriage, Timothy and Kathy Keller, p. 144